

NORWICH CONNECTS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Norwich Connect is a 15 year partnership between Norwich City Council and Steria, which delivers 4 transformation elements:

- A programme of in-depth revision of all major service delivery processes
- Customer relationship management software; workflow management; and web transactions
- Managed ICT service including hardware and software refreshment
- High specification voice and data infrastructure.

The partnership is successfully delivering change in 3 areas:

Ease of contact and fulfillment for customers

- Multiple access channels providing customer choice
- Significant levels of first point resolution of enquiries (81%)
- Use of innovative technology (eg remote and mobile working)
- Easy tracking of case progress, with easier resolution and higher satisfaction

Customer groupings and customer focus

- Re-organisation of services into 3 customer focused teams:
 - Residents Services Team
 - Tenants Services Team
 - Revenues and Benefits team
- Improved data on customer needs, patterns of activity and problem “hotspots”
- Removal of the burden of routine work from back office staff

Service synergies and internal efficiency

- 13.5% reduction in posts within the scope of the BPR work
- £2.8m recurring reduction in revenue costs
- New organisational roles to maximize ongoing benefits (eg customer contact and workflow management)
- Development of new process mapping and BPR skills to maintain the efficiency drive
- Detailed process maps to maximize risk management and ensure business continuity.

The partnership is a national good practice model and the City Council regularly hosts visits from other authorities. The Council has also been a pathfinder for the national mobile working project.

Background to the Norwich Connects partnership – the need for change

- 1 The Norwich Connect partnership was developed against a background of significant national change within the local government world:
 - a national drive for greater efficiency
 - stronger commitment to partnership working
 - a growing focus on the needs of customers
 - greater use of technology to streamline processes (including rigorous IEG targets and investments).
- 2 There was increasing recognition that local government could not easily address all of these issues working alone, and that in many cases a partnership approach melding private sector technical knowledge and change management skills, together with a public sector ethos, was a positive and mutually beneficial potential solution.
- 3 In addition to the emerging national picture, the local situation for Norwich City Council also provided many opportunities that such a partnership solution might address:
 - Public satisfaction was comparatively low, with 2 in every 9 local people expressing dissatisfaction with the Council
 - This dissatisfaction was happening against a background of high staff numbers (958 fte) and high staff sickness (average of 15.5 days per employee, equivalent to 35 full time posts in better performing District Councils)
 - Very traditional management structures – for example each service was supported by devolved administrative staff, meaning reduced flexibility and resistance to change
 - Management structures were not built around customer needs - to make contact the public had to recognise the service that they wanted, then find and ring the correct number or go to the correct office
 - Poor information processes - if the public contacted the wrong service they were often given poor information or transferred to another telephone line, with no ownership of the customers concerns
 - ‘Know how’ had been passed on informally between officials without being written down – this resulted in lack of clarity and consistency as well as unnecessarily complex processes and high risk if difficulties arose
 - Public requests were not collected in a consistent way and the few systems that were in place to monitor responses were labour-intensive.
 - Information did not flow well between administrative staff dealing with the public and professional and technical staff. The experience of administrative staff in dealing with the public wasn’t always fully appreciated or used to make improvements.
 - The Council’s IT equipment and software was not fit-for-purpose. Investment decisions were ad hoc and based on historic budget allocations, with no assessment of the potential for future efficiency or increased public satisfaction.

- 4 In the light of this, Norwich City Council carried out a major review of its aspirations, and those of local people, and developed a clear vision of the sort of council it wanted to be in the future. But it also became clear that the Council lacked the capacity and skills to actually make it happen on the ground. The Council therefore entered a process to seek a partnership approach with the private sector.

The solution – the Norwich Connect Partnership

- 5 Norwich Connect is a 15-year, £85 million PFI partnership with Steria UK Ltd and represents one of the biggest steps to change at Norwich City Council. The resulting change programme has now been embedded into the Council, and is beginning to deliver both tangible service improvements and real efficiency savings.
- 6 The objectives for the Norwich Connect partnership were to redesign and refocus the Council in order to:
 - o Increase efficiency, strip out duplication and streamline processes
 - o Create multiple access channels for citizens and give a range of choices for how they might access the Council and its services
 - o Resolve customer service requests at the first point of contact/ self service, and release technical staff from more routine enquiries
 - o Improve our responsiveness to customers eg our ability to track progress of service delivery
 - o Improve our understanding of customer needs, patterns of activity and Hotspots
 - o Improve the technology base, and make the best use of new innovative technology e.g. mobile working/NOMAD
 - o Maximise self service and facilitate on-line resolution wherever possible
 - o Provide new skills and ways of working for our staff.
- 7 Through this partnership Steria and their sub contractors (Atos KPMG Consulting (AKC), Comino, EPIC and BT) introduced 4 interlinked elements, which have been subsequently transferred into the Council's direct management through planned skills transfer:
 - o A programme of in-depth review and revision of all our corporate and major service delivery processes (Business Process Re-engineering or BPR) conducted jointly by AKC and Council employees.
 - o The introduction of new software for customer relationship management (CRM); workflow management; and interactive transactions on the web
 - o A managed ICT service including the replacement and refreshment of existing equipment, intranet and software systems.
 - o New voice and data infrastructure capable of carrying scanned documents and other images at a normal response speed of less than 2 seconds.
- 8 The criteria for the "Efficiency and Modernisation" category sets out 4 main impacts that the successful submission will need to meet:
 - Where savings have been made to meet the 2.5% target

- Measurable improvements for citizens
- Driving more resources to the front-line, and
- Re-engineering delivery.

9 The rest of this submission sets out how the Norwich Connect project meets these requirements, and two specific case studies which illustrate the practical impact on service delivery and performance.

Savings achieved

10 The Business Process Re-Engineering Programme gave the Council the following key opportunities and challenges

- Managing the loss of 13.5% of the posts within the scope of BPR to achieve the £2.8 million of recurring revenue reductions
- Designing new jobs and organisational structures to maximise the benefits of the ICT, especially customer contact and workflow management software
- The Business Process Re-engineering was driven by a joint team of AKC consultants and 15 carefully chosen City Council employees. The team worked closely with staff responsible for the service areas or corporate process to record in detail how ‘we do things around here’ – every actual step from beginning to end. This included mapping the ‘hand-offs’ between staff and ‘red flagging’ the points at which things were most likely to go wrong. Involving staff from the outset was invaluable and has been a key factor in galvanising a spirit of change.

11 As part of the Norwich Connect partnership Steria contracted to deliver a programme of BPR that would achieve a recurring saving of £2,813,962 in the Council’s revenue budgets, and this was required by the Council to pay the full unitary charge to Steria. This savings target, and the BPR programme was based on a ‘base line of employees’. Alongside this, in order to achieve a balanced budget and to introduce new ways of delivering services, the Council has made significant changes to services and roles. These changes include changes to the senior management structure of the Council; delivering Building Control Services through the Central Norfolk Building Control Partnership; and outsourcing Printing Services.

12 The savings and changes achieved can be summarised as follows:

1. Savings achieved through the BPR programme	£2,401,796
2. The amount ‘set aside’ to off set other changes in the Council’s employee establishment	£266,970
3. Reductions in the scope of the Norwich Connect partnership ; Removing video conferencing Removing public access terminals Reducing the number of PCs required	£45,500
4. Savings identified as a result of outsourcing eg Printing Services that were used for other purposes	£30,000

5. Savings to be achieved by changing the way internal photocopying and printing services are delivered.	£70,190
	TOTAL £2,814,456

13 This demonstrates that the Council, as a result of working with Steria has achieved a £2,813,962 reduction in the Council's revenue budgets, whilst transforming the way that the Council works, and significantly upgrading the technology platform and systems to improve service delivery and efficiency.

Measurable improvements for citizens

14 The partnership has focused on the key relationships that local people have with the Council. These were identified as the following key building blocks for the partnership:

- Residents – accessing and using universal services
- Tenants – dealing with us as their landlord
- Claimants – taking up housing and council tax benefits.

15 Using these themes as the overall framework for change, in each service area detailed analysis was carried out to map customer requirements at the first point of contact. This information was then used to re-engineer processes, in order to limit the number of times the public were passed on to other Council Officers.

16 The result of this programme of work is that:

- Calls to the council have increased from 29,200 in May 2004, to 48,226 in May 2005, and again up to 76,574 in March 2006. This is a total increase of 163%
- On average, the 3 service based teams answer 62% of the calls that come in to the Council, and this figure is growing as new services are added
- On average, 81% of service requests are dealt with at the first point of contact.
- There has been an 18% reduction in staffing levels, as services are relocated to the front office, and "backroom" posts are deleted.

17 This has also provided the Council with a platform to achieve more in terms of both excellence in customer service and increasing efficiency, and so an ongoing programme of adding more services to the front office is still in progress.

18 These changes have also provided the opportunity to develop new services where there is evidence (from the contact management system) of high customer demand. An example of this is anti-social behaviour, where the Council used the Norwich Connect partnership to develop an innovative approach to ASB service delivery. See an example case study at Annex A.

Moving resources to the front line

- 19 By definition, the Norwich Connect project progressively reviews processes and refocuses them around the needs of the customer. Each service and processes are then rebuilt so that customer enquiries can be handled as simply as possible, primarily through resolution (wherever possible) at the first point of contact. In order to achieve this resources and staffing need to be relocated into the front office, much closer to the customer.
- 20 Over the life of the Norwich Connect partnership the BPR programme has examined a wide range of service processes, and has created 3 customer focused teams (RST – Residents Services, TST – Tenants Services, and Housing Benefits) where the majority of customer enquiries can be handled. This change has meant that all back office support staffing resources have been re-engineered, and moved into these 3 dedicated customer support teams. Inevitably this has required major process re-engineering and significant skills and development training for staff.
- 21 However, this refocusing of resources onto front line service delivery has produced very clear benefits:
- It removes silo based front-line approach of individual service areas
 - Maintains consistent levels of customer service across all service areas
 - Provides resilience to staffing of front-line teams (e.g. for sickness and training)
 - Offers the opportunity for front-line staff to be trained in a number of services and therefore become multi skilled
 - Enables response times to be managed to ensure all front line enquiries are handled quickly and effectively.
- 22 A specific example of this process has been the recent re-engineering of housing services, and the consequential restructuring including the creation of the Tenant Services Team (TST). See an example case study at Annex B.

Re-engineering delivery

- 23 The Norwich Connect partnership encompasses a significant BPR programme, which has been carried out jointly between Steria experts and Council officers. Over time full skills transfer has been achieved, and now a dedicated Service Improvement team exists which manages an ongoing service re-engineering programme. The wide scope of the 3 key re-engineering programmes is described below.
- 24 The Residents' Services Team has now been established as a first point of contact for citizens for the following services :

Parking enquiries Anti-social Behaviour Green Spaces Highways Environmental Health	Street and Citizen Services Private Sector Housing Requests for Cones Go 4 Less Cards Development Control
--	---

25 The Tenancy Services Team has now been established as a first point of contact for citizens for the following services :

Housing repairs Neighbourhood Officer and Homeless Advisor Appointments Homeless Applications Housing Register Neighbourhood complaints Rights to Buy	Tenancy and Rent Assistance with Mutual Exchange Website Transfers Offers and sign-ups Leaseholds Garages
--	---

26 The Revenues and Benefits Customer Services Team has now been established as a first point of contact for citizens for the following services :

Council Tax Business Rates Housing and Council Tax Benefit Benefits Overpayments

27 In all of these services processes have been re-engineered to enable first point of resolution in the majority of cases. As well as establishing the Customer Service Teams the 'back office' processes have been redesigned to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

Conclusion

28 In essence the Norwich Connect partnership :

- Is an innovative and creative combination of private sector skills and investment with public sector service delivery ethos
- An example of a major change programme which has already delivered increased customer focus, improved service performance and significant efficiency gains
- Provides the technology and skills platform for ongoing improvements in service performance and efficiency
- Is progressively re-focussing all Norwich City Council services around the needs of the customer
- Is steadily re-engineering processes so that resources are released for use at the front line to improve the customer experience
- Is identifying areas of need for new services which customer want, and providing the means for delivering them effectively
- Is enabling better targeting of limited resources based on growing evidence of customer needs

- Is a sustainable and ongoing business model which is attracting major interest from local authorities across the country.

Norwich City Council and Steria (UK) Ltd

Case Study (1)

Using technology to improve service delivery – anti-social behaviour

Summary

The City Council has adopted an integrated and holistic approach to tackling Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) within the Norwich area. Our innovative use of new technology, developed in partnership with our ITC partners Steria as part of the Norwich Connect Project, has been a major driver for change.

The technology enables officers to electronically track all contact with the public, information can be passed seamlessly from one service to another within the authority enabling officers to build up accurate case histories. Information from the public is captured at first point of call and any necessary actions will be taken immediately. Through the use of technology the authority has the ability to easily identify ASB hotspots and this information is shared with other agencies including the Police.

Examples of key improvements made

Following a detailed service and process review, the following improvements were made in 2005/06:

- A new Residents Service team was set up providing a single point of contact for customers, and handling all incoming telephone contact using scripting and workflow. All information is captured in real time so that actions can be taken immediately
- Consistent and accurate Information - contact management means we can track contact across the authority for relevant information enabling staff to easily share information. Complaints are linked for a particular perpetrator facilitating a far more holistic approach
- Simple and effective reporting processes - on May 16 2006 the ASB Hotline was launched. The Hotline is staffed 24/7 and all calls are captured using the COMINO call script system. The call script ensure details of the incident, the location, action taken etc
- Increased staff engagement with residents, either to discuss issues, report back on work taking place to address these issues or general information about Council services
- The ability to log, track and analyse data enables us to identify trends and hot spots, so that longer-term actions can be taken. This information is also shared with Police and Fire Service data to ensure joined up responses.
- Improved response rates – these are recorded within COMINO enabling managers to easily track performance, set improvement targets and target resources more effectively.

Case Study (2)

Moving resources to the front line – Tenant Services Team (TST)

Summary

A complete re-structure of housing services, including the movement of many customer contact services into a new Tenant Services team (TST). This achieved a net reduction of 28.72 full time employees, and savings of £635,563 to the Housing Revenue Account. These savings were used to fund the customer contact and service improvements delivered by Norwich Connect and enable additional savings from management costs to be redirected to work to improve council homes.

The efficiencies were achieved from 2 main work streams within Norwich Connect:

- a) Business Process re-engineering work, including the introduction of the Comino customer contact system to enable more enquiries to be streamline customer contact. Workflow and performance management was also be simplified.
- b) Refocusing service delivery into new teams, including an improved repairs appointment system which is reducing the number of calls from tenants about outstanding repairs.

Examples of key improvements made

- A focus on a “neighbourhood” approach and “neighbourhood” teams including housing officers, premises managers, wardens, police, sheltered scheme managers and others. This has resulted in:
 - Increased home visits by appointment for tenants and leaseholders
 - Local housing ‘surgeries’ at convenient locations.
 - More regular estate inspections with tenant representatives
 - Greater tenant and leaseholder participation
 - Greater partnership working to resolve local issues
- Providing a full Tenancy Service Team (TST) service who now:
 - Handle all telephone calls and visitor enquiries
 - Resolve most enquiries first time with the support of the new Comino customer contact software under Norwich Connect
 - Use COMINO to identify and help tenants with other housing issues
 - Undertake customer surveys to manage performance and develop housing services
- A more holistic approach to ensuring tenants are supported in managing and maintain their tenancies through:
 - Greater concentration on Anti Social Behaviour issues related specifically to council tenancies with improved corporate co-ordination of ASB and handling of private sector cases being achieved by a new corporate ASB team
 - A new Families in Crisis team.